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ABSTRACT

In the spring of 1987, several coaches at a forensic tournament expressed concern over a general lack of "safe debate" competition for novices. The coaches agreed that the solution was mutual support among themselves and a supportive environment which placed new debaters on an equal footing. That same spring, three colleges took part in a novice competition at Ferris State University (Michigan), at which most participants received trophies. The goal was to host a tournament in which novices could feel secure to practice the skills they learn and to learn new ones in a nurturing environment. Coaches became increasingly committed to inexpensive, supportive novice tournaments, and the Tri-State Debate Association (made up of coaches from Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio) began to take form. As the organization grew, it became the Novice Debate Association (NDA). By 1991 the group had 26 member institutions in 5 states. The organization's primary objective is to encourage novice level competition in Cross Examination Data Association (CEDA) debate by hosting events which allow nonthreatening, supportive, and balanced competition. The NDA asks judges to be competent and compassionate and to give constructive, supportive comments to participants. Debate has a place in the education of all students who live in a democracy. NDA supporters believe that the organization provides that opportunity. Relevant correspondence, an NDA membership list, a copy of the NDA Contitution and Bylaws, and minutes of a meeting are appended. (SG)

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THE TRI-STATE NOVICE CEDA ASSOCIATION:

AN EXPERIMENT IN COOPERATION

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Presented to the Speech Communication Association , Atlanta, Georgia, November, 1991

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THE TRI-STATE NOVICE CEDA ASSOCIATION:

AN EXPERIMENT IN COOPERATION

One of my colleagues told me that he was pacing up and down in the hallway outside the room while students were debating. He noticed a custodian working nearby. The custodian approached my colleague and proceeded to tell him that she had figured out just what was going on in there. When he asked her what she had concluded, she responded,"It's a speed reading contest."

I once ventured out on the debate circuit early in the semester with an unseasoned team. This tournament was the first debate meet for my team outside the walls of our classroom. I was anxious for my students and I knew that we would not be staying for the final rounds, but I felt that they needed "real world" competition. We were a fledgling team and had no other teams to compete against in our school. On the way home one of my debaters read a ballot that caused me to lose half of the team I had. The graduate assistant who was judging had harshly told my team that they were ill prepared and should not be traveled. It was a humiliating and insulting ballot. The worst part was the irreparable damage to the ego of my debater.

More recently, I became part of the evidence in a debate. As a communication scholar I never thought that advocating clear communication was a controversial notion. I found out that I was wrong. In the open division semi-final debate round at our

(Anderson University) debate tournament this October a negative team objected to the rapid delivery of the first affirmative. To substantiate that objection, the negative team quoted from my tournament welcome letter (see appendix): "We have tried to create a tournament which will challenge the debaters to be good communicators and good debaters....Most of all, this is an opportunity for the debaters to learn whether they can communicate their ideas to the average educated person. I hope that this emphasis on communication helps us all to bring debate back into the realm of the real world."

Soon after the tournament, I received the October 1, 1991, CEDA Executive Secretary's report. It was after reading a letter in that report written by Ken Bahm of Gonzaga State and Brian McGee of Northeast Louisiana University that I realized I may qualify for membership in the "Buffalos" as opposed to the "Brat Pack" of debate coaches. As Bahm and McGee see the issue, the old timers who first joined Ceda are the "Buffalo" or "the system" and the newer coaches are the "Brat Pack" or coaches seeking more diversity. It is interesting to think of such a dichotomy existing in CEDA debate, but it is dismaying for the students who find themselves in an argument that they may not understand.

Debate coaches are busy people and I know that you, like me, may have thought, "If it weren't for these students, I could get a lot done." The absurdity of the thought is enough to pull most coaches back on track. We prioritize what we do and who we are with the needs of our debaters. These incidents are probably only a part of the stories that could be told among those of us in this room. Sometimes we have teams that speed read regardless of

our coaching. Sometimes we get insensitive ballots and sometimes it's difficult to get "safe debate" for inexperienced novices. If these stories sound familiar to you, then I think you will appreciate the goals of the Tri- State Debate Association (currently Novice Debate Association).

THE HISTORY OF TRI-STATE (NOVICE DEBATE ASSOCIATION)

In the Spring of 1987 at Otterbein University's tournament several coaches expressed their concern over the general lack of "safe debate" competition for novices. Most of all, a novice team which adhered to their coach's advice all the time often found themselves competing against "those debaters the coach warned us about". The coaches agreed that in order to foster "safe debate" for novices it would require mutual support from other coaches and a supportive environment which placed the really new debaters on an equal footing. We also acknowledged that it would be expensive to travel novices to separate tournaments. Determined to solve the problem, Gary Horn of Ferris State University , Larry Underberg of Manchester College and John Lama of Hillsdale College held a one day, strictly novice tournament at Ferris State University that same Spring. The three colleges were the only ones who attended. There were no entry fees, and Manchester College donated lots of trophies. In fact, almost every debater received some kind of trophy. The tab room was located in the hall. The competition was fun and winners were determined, but to this day, the coaches do not recall which school won. Winning the most rounds or speaker points was not the true goal. The true

goal was to host a tournament in which new debaters could feel secure to practice what skills they had learned and to learn new skills in a nurturing environment. These coaches and students felt that they had accomplished a lot. In fact, it was such a positive experience that a plan began to unfold for another tournament.

In the Spring of 1989 Ferris State University hosted another tournament for novice debaters. Word had gotten around about the positive feeling that the previous tournament had fostered. At this tournament there were four colleges--Anderson University, Ferris State University, Hope College, and Manchester College. It was at this time that the coaches became committed to the concept of inexpensive, supportive novice tournaments. After several telephone conversations, Gary Horn of Ferris State University, Larry Underberg of Manchester College, Gary Bayliss of Northern Ohio University and I agreed to form a structured organization solely dedicated to novice debate competition. Over the following summer, Larry Underberg wrote a constitution and the Tri-State Debate Association began to take form. An Executive Secretary was selected to serve until an election and a Board of Directors (one from each state--Ohio, Indiana and Michigan) was appointed and we announced our intention to other colleges and universities (see letter in appendix) .

The name of the organization came from the fact that the coaches forming the organization were from the three states of Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. By November of 1989, the constitution was completed and a board of directors was in place. We scheduled our first tournament for December of 1989 at Ferris State, but our timing was poor and it was cancelled. The

following Spring Anderson University hosted a tournament with 10 schools in attendance. The Tri-State Debate Association was born.

As with any new organization there were problems. One that became very obvious was that we had viewed ourselves as a geographic unit of three states--Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. It became clear in the fall of 1990 that the organization had much more than a three state following. At our first business meeting on the Otterbein University campus, the Tri-State Debate members ratified the constitution and renamed itself to the Novice Debate Association (NDA). We also altered the constitution to allow for a board of directors member from each state represented by the membership. The new name is much more descriptive of our goals and allows any college which supports our goals to join and have a voice. At this meeting the membership roster included 12 colleges and universities.

Our next tournament was in December of 1990 at Northern Ohio University. Thirteen schools with a total of 28 teams attended the tournament. In November, just prior to this tournament, Allegheny College (PA) and Edinboro University (PA) hosted their own 2 college tournament patterned from NDA ideals. The results were very positive (see letter in appendix).

Since our initial tournaments, we have scheduled 3 tournaments per school year in a variety of locations to allow members to attend at least one. In February of 1991 we held a tournament at Ferris State University. In March of 1991 a tournament at Anderson University (IN) was cancelled due to a damaging ice storm. A tournament to replace the Anderson tournament was held at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn,

MI. It was attended by 9 schools and 19 teams. At the end of the 1990-91 school year the NDA had 26 member institutions from a five state area (Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Pennsylvania).

This school year we have three tournaments scheduled. The first is scheduled at Lewis University, Romeoville, IL, December 7, 1991. Our next tournament will be at Allegheny College in Meadeville, PA, on February 15, 1992. The third tournament will be April 4, 1992, at Ohio Northern University Ada, Ohio. Our membership roster grows as the tournaments occur. Currently, the NDA has 17 members from 7 states (see list in appendix).

At the recent CEDA assessment conference in Minnesota this August we were the most represented forensic association in this Pi Kappa Delta province. Although our goal is not necessarily to boast a large membership roster, we do seem to attract a variety of members. Last year we had a group of students from Wittenberg join our organization. They wanted to encourage the formation of a debate team on their campus. They saw our organization as an opportunity to break into the debate community without the difficulty of uneven competition.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE NOVICE DEBATE ASSOCIATION

To paraphrase our constitution (appendix), the primary objective of the Novice Debate Association is to encourage novice level debate competition in CEDA debate by hosting novice tournaments which allow participation in a competitive environment that is nonthreatening, supportive and competitively balanced. In addition, the organization will provide a mutual support network designed to promote debate participation and assist with program development.

We explicitly state that we value debate as a practical educational activity and we endorse the notion that debate should mirror both stylistically and analytically the skills required in other public forums. We define novice debaters as students who are, at a minimum, in strict compliance with CEDA rules, but we recognize that our tournaments are geared toward debaters with very limited experience such as classroom debate students or students new to the debate experience.

As a result of our policy, we often find that students gather at a tournament and ask each other what experience each has had. Often the answer is none. It is very comforting to these students to know that they will not be overwhelmed by the other team.

In addition to our view of debate experience, we have a specific view of the judging practice that we encourage. We ask that judges be competent and compassionate. It is expected that judges embrace our philosophy and, when possible, give constructive/supportive comments to participants. We do allow

varsity debaters to judge at the discretion of the school supplying the judge. Although we have tried it both ways, we encourage our tournaments to stand alone. This ensures a better judging pool and lowers the anxiety for the debaters.

To keep the tournaments affordable for colleges and universities who do not have big budgets, we do not charge tournament fees. We do charge one annual membership fee of $25. This fee pays for printing costs, end of year trophies, mailing expenses and an annual luncheon for the fall business meeting of member coaches. The cost of the administration of a tournament is absorbed by the host institution. We also help to hold costs down by only hosting one day, four round tournaments. We feel that institutions who are near our tournament sight will be able to attend without hotel/motel fees and large food costs. In addition, we feel that a four round tournament is enough for a new debater to handle in one day. Awards are given to top teams and top speakers in both an overall category and to teams and individuals who are participating in their first (high school or college) competitive debate tournament. The students who win these awards are not as concerned about the quality of the award, as they are about receiving one. Each debater who participates in any tournament receives a certificate from the NDA. No one is a loser at our tournaments.

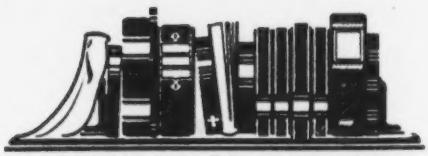
In the spring at our final tournament we recognize the year's outstanding directors in each of the member states and one of these individuals is selected as the Association's Coach of the Year. These awards are determined by a vote of the membership. Last Spring was our first year to conduct this election (see

appendix). The board of directors and the Executive Secretary notify the appropriate college and university Presidents of this award. I am pleased to report that the Presidents have responded very favorably to this information. Although we cannot link larger budgets or faculty promotions directly to these letters, we feel that we are creating good public relations for the coach and for debate competition in general.

What the NDA is doing fosters a certain attitude toward debate in general. We feel that we are realistic and encourage humane treatment of debaters and judges alike. It is "safe debate" for novice debaters. We discourage a heavy focus on "win at any cost". We reward good coaching and we encourage communication in debate. We are not ashamed to ask our colleagues to view these debates and we certainly are not fearful for our budgets if a Dean or Vice President chooses to watch a round. We believe no custodian will walk by the open door of one of our rounds and mistake the debate for a speed reading contest.

Whether you are a member of the "Buffalo" or the "Brat Pack" we invite you to join us. If you do not choose to join us, we ask that you respect our endeavor. Debate does have a place in the education of <u>all</u> students who will live in a democracy. We believe the Novice Debate Association provides that opportunity.

APPENDIX



ANDERSON UNIVERSITY

School of Social and Professional Studies
Department of Communication

October 4, 1991

Dear Coach,

Welcome to our tournament. We are glad you came. We have tried to make this tournament a positive experience for you and your debaters. I hope that we are successful. If you have questions or problems that we can solve , please feel free to ask any of us. I would also be happy hear suggestions for our next tournament.

We have tried to create a tournament which will challenge the debaters to be good communicators and good debaters. Many of our judges will be from the Anderson University Faculty and Staff. In fact, I have a Dean and a Vice President judging in the rounds. In some rounds, there may be local attorneys and judges. Most of all, this is an opportunity for the debaters to learn whether they can communicate their ideas to the average educated person. I hope that this emphasis on communication helps us all to bring debate back into the realm of the real world.

We hope you enjoy your stay in Anderson. If there is anything we can do to make your stay more enjoyable, please ask us.

Sincerely,

Virginia Chapman

Anderson University · Anderson, Indiana 46012-3462 · (317) 641-4340

ANDERSON UNIVERSITY
School of Social and Professional Studies
Department of Communication

November 15, 1989

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to announce the formation of the Tri-State Debate Association (TSDA). This association is the brain child of coaches who want tournament competition for first year novice debaters in a friendly environment without spending all the budget. We are currently in the process of writing a constitution and by-laws, but we can assure you that our goal is to provide sound competition at affordable prices for novice debaters. We plan to hold two or three CEDA sanctioned tournaments each year.

This year we would like to inaugurate our efforts with a tournament the weekend of December 1 & 2, 1989 at Ferris State University. You should receive details in another mailing very soon.

If you feel you can support TSDA we would like your help. We are requesting membership contributions of $25.00 (more if you can) to begin our efforts. At this point, our biggest expenses are postage and stationery, but the bulk of the membership fee will help defray tournament costs. We would be glad to hear your suggestions and, of course, if you would like to host a tournament we would be more than glad to hear from you. Feel free to contact any of us. Please make your checks payable to TRI-STATE DEBATE ASSOCIATION and send to:

Virginia Chapman
Department of Communication
Anderson University
Anderson, Indiana 46012-3462

We hope to see you in December!

Sincerely,

Virginia

Virginia Chapman
Executive Secretary

TRI-STATE DEBATE ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors:
Gary Bayliss, Ohio
Speech Communication Dept.
Ohio Northern University
Ada, Ohio 45810
Gary Horn, Michigan
Speech Communication Dept.
Ferris State College
Big Rapids, MI 49307
Larry Underberg, Indiana
Dept. of Communication
Manchester College
North Manchester, IN 46962

Anderson University · Anderson, Indiana 46012-3462 · (317) 641-4340

Jeanne Gallagher
Paul Oehlke

Virginia Chapman, Secretary
Novice Debate Association
Dept. of Communication
Anderson, Indiana 46012

Dear Professor Chapman;

We have just finished hosting the first annual Allegheny-Edinboro "Gobbler Fest" Novice debate tournament. Our goals have been achieved and the results have been better than expected. Some observations from this experience may be of interest to the Novice Debate Association.

First, the tournament was inexpensive and convenient. In keeping with the Association's policies, no entry fees were charged. Thus, students had never debated before were offered an opportunity to participate that would otherwise been unavailable.

Second, the tournament served as an extention of our classrooms. Students currently enrolled in Argument and Debate, Persuasion, and Public Speaking competed. A great deal of the gulf that separates the tournament from the classroom was eliminated. We suspect that this tournament will be a boon for our recruiting efforts.

Third, the demonstration debate held before the rounds began served as a model for the rest of the day. A concrete example of what was in store was provided before the formal debate ever began. This procedure seemed to have a calming effect on several very nervous people.

Fourth, the competitive motive was drastically reduced. No speaker awards were presented to instill the *team* nature of debate. Awards certificates were presented to all to reinforce the philosophy that all who participate in debate benefit.

Fifth, senior debaters benefited from the opportunity to coach, judge, and help in tournament administration. Through helping those who are entering the debate world, experienced debaters earn their senior status. This is a more significant means of earning "wings" than simply advancing to the varsity level of competition.

Finally, your humble servants, Gallagher and Oehlke, will be home this evening with our loved ones knowing that we've done a good day's work. We're satisfied that we've contributed to improvement of critical thinking and decision making, without having "burned the candle at both ends" to accomplish our goals.

Please find enclosed a copy of the tournament invitation and results for the Association's files. We hope what we learned at this tournament will be of use.

Jeanne Gallagher
Allegheny College

Paul Oehlke
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

1991-92 NOVICE DEBATE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

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NOVICE DEBATE ASSOCIATION
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: NAME

The Name of this organization shall be the Novice Debate Association.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The primary objectives of this association shall be to encourage novice level competition in CEDA debate through:

a) The establishment and support of novice debate tournaments which allow participation in a competitive environment that is nonthreatening, supportive, and competitively balanced.

b) The provision of a mutual support network designed to promote debate participation and assist with program development in member states.

ARTICLE III: PHILOSOPHY

Section 1. The Association values debate as a practical educational activity and endorses the notion that tournament debate practices by debaters should mirror both stylistically and analytically the skills required in other public forums.

Section 2. The Association believes in balanced competition at the novice level and requires at minimum that all competitors are in strict compliance with CEDA rules of novice eligibility. The Association recognizes that within the definition of "novice," there is often great disparity in debating skill and views their novice tournaments as geared toward debaters of limited competitive experience and/or classroom debaters as opposed to novice teams which enjoy consistent competitive success in other tournaments.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be conferred on any two or four year college/university upon payment of annual dues to the Association.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

The administrative duties of the Association shall be carried out by an Executive Secretary and a Board of Directors consisting of a representative from each member state. Officers will be elected to serve two year terms by a vote of the membership conducted late spring of odd numbered years.

ARTICLE VII: FINANCES

Section 1. Annual dues for each member institution shall be determined annually by the membership through voting at a business meeting or through correspondence voting.

Section 2. Annual dues are payable to the Executive Secretary on or before September 30 of each year or as otherwise stipulated by the membership.

ARTICLE VIII: TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

Section 1. Tournaments:

a) The Association shall endeavor to secure hosts for three tournaments each year - one tournament on each CEDA topic which should be sanctioned by CEDA and one at the conclusion of the CEDA season (nonsanctioned) designated as the Novice Debate Association Championship Tournament.

b) Tournaments should involve no entry fee. The cost of modest awards shall be covered by the Association's budget or donation. Host schools are expected to absorb the costs of tournament administration.

Section 2. Judging:

The association recognizes the need to provide judging that is both competent and compassionate. It is expected that judges embrace the philosophy of the Association and give, when possible, constructive/supportive comments to participants. Judging assignment to rounds will be random.

Section 3. Awards:

a) At each tournament, awards shall be given to top teams, and top speakers, in both an overall category and to teams and individuals who are participating in their first (high school or college) competitive debate tournament.

b) At the Association's final tournament, cumulative awards will be given to the top member schools based on their overall record in that year's Association hosted tournaments. These awards will be given in addition to those specified in (a).

c) Recognition will be afforded to the year's "outstanding directors" in each of the member states. One of the three recipients shall receive recognition as the Association's "Coach of the Year." Awards will be based on a vote of the directors of all member schools attending the Association's final tournament. Nominations should be given to the Executive Secretary or his/her designate at the beginning of the final Association tournament. An individual coach may not be eligible for recognition two consecutive years. The award may recognize competitive success but should favor individuals whose efforts best embody the goals and philosophy of the Association. It shall be the Executive Secretary's responsibility to conduct the election.

Novice Debate Association

MINUTES OF THE NDA FINAL MEETING 1990-91

The Novice Debate Association held its final meeting of the year at the Henry Ford Community College Novice Debate Tournament April 6, 1991. Members present included Paul Oehlke, Edinboro College; Gary Horn, Ferris State University; Ted Urban, Henry Ford Community College;John Lama, Hillsdale College; Tom Lyzenga, Lewis University; Gary Bayliss, Ohio Northern University; Jerry Baninga, Western Illinois University; Larry Underberg, Manchester College; and Virginia Chapman, Anderson University.

Items discussed included the location of next year's tournaments. Although these dates and locations are not firm, the following dates and locations were offered: Lewis University, December; Allegheny College, February; and Ohio Northern University, April.

Another item of business discussed was whether NDA tournaments should be held concurrently with other tournaments. The coaches present agreed that no official action be taken to mandate that all NDA tournaments be stand alone tournaments, but that the NDA would make a recommendation that stand alone tournaments are desired.

It was also suggested that the last NDA tournament of the year should accept voluntary registration fees. The amount of the fee and whether to contribute a fee or not would be determined by each contributing school. These fees would be receipted as registration fees and deposited in the NDA treasury for NDA use. This policy would not supersede the constitutional statement that any member school can participate in NDA tournaments for the once a year fee of $25. Since the spring semester is often so difficult for travel to tournaments, many schools end the year with a budget surplus. The opportunity to voluntarily contribute a fee may be helpful to both NDA and the member school.

Coach awards as provided by the NDA constitution were awarded at the Henry Ford tournament. Coach of the year for the individual states were: Jerry Baninga, IL; Larry Underberg, IN; Gary Horn, MI; Gary Bayliss, OH; and Jeanne Gallagher, PA. The outstanding coach of the year was Gary Horn of Ferris State University, Big Rapids, MI. Congratulations to all!

The best overall NDA schools for the year were also recognized. First place was Henry Ford Community College and second place was Ferris State University.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia K Chapman

Virginia Chapman
Executive Secretary